

**MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CERTIFICATION BUREAU**

**Policies and Procedures
State Certification of Competency for Home Health Aides**

CFR 484.36(a) Standard: Home health aide training.

(1) Content and duration of training. The aide training program must address each of the following subject areas through classroom and supervised practical training totaling at least 75 hours, with at least 16 hours devoted to supervised practical training. The individual being trained must complete at least 16 hours of classroom training before beginning the supervised practical training.

State Agency (SA) program: Home health aides wishing SA certification of competency and placement in the nurse aide registry must complete a SA approved nurse aide training and competency evaluation program (NATCEP). The NATCEP requires 75 hours of training, of which at least 25 hours must be conducted in a clinical setting. The NATCEP also requires a minimum of 16 hours of classroom training in the following skills prior to beginning contact with patients: communication and interpersonal skills, patient rights, basic infection control, fostering independence and safety. In addition to the NATCEP, home health aides must complete at least 16 hours of additional classroom and clinical training and a competency evaluation in adaptations of nursing and nursing-related skills to the home setting. This 16 hours must include the following subject areas: (1) use of ambulation equipment in the home; (2) home transfer and ambulation techniques; (3) home safety measures; (4) care and disposal of contaminated supplies in the home; and, (5) home management and homemaking.

(i) through (xiii) content of training: (i) communication skills. (ii) observation, reporting and documentation of patient status and the care or services provided. (iii) reading and recording temperature, pulse, and respiration. (iv) basic infection control procedures. (v) basic elements of body functioning and changes in body functioning that must be reported to an aide's supervisor. (vi) maintenance of a clean, safe, and healthy environment. (vii) recognizing emergencies and knowledge of emergency procedures. (viii) the physical, emotional, and developmental needs of and ways to work with the populations served by the HHA, including the need for respect for the patient, his or her privacy and his or her property. (ix) appropriate and safe techniques in personal hygiene and grooming that include—(A) bed bath. (B) sponge, tub, or shower bath. (C) shampoo, sink, tub, or bed. (D) nail and skin care. (E) oral hygiene. (F) toileting and elimination. (x) safe transfer techniques and ambulation. (xi) normal range of motion and positioning. (xii) adequate nutrition and fluid intake. (xiii) any other task that the HHA may choose to have the home health aide perform. "Supervised practical training" means training in a laboratory or other setting in which the trainee demonstrates knowledge while performing tasks on an individual under the direct supervision of a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse.

State Agency program: The SA approved curriculum for an approved NATCEP includes all of the subjects listed in 484.36(a)(1)(i) through (xiii) and requires that the training and competency evaluation of clinical skills be conducted in a laboratory or clinical setting under the **direct** supervision of a qualified registered nurse or licensed practical nurse instructor approved by the SA.

(2) Conduct of training—(i) Organizations. A home health aide training program may be offered by any organization except an HHA that, within the previous 2 years has been found—(A) out of compliance with requirements of this paragraph (a) or paragraph (b) of this section; (B) to permit an individual that does not meet the definition of “home health aide” as specified in 484.4 to furnish home health aide services (with the exception of licensed health professionals or volunteers); (C) has been subject to an extended (or partial extended) survey as a result of having been found to have furnished substandard care (or for other reasons at the discretion of the HCFA (now CMS) or the State); (D) has been assessed a civil monetary penalty of not less than \$5,000 as an intermediate sanction; (E) has been found to have compliance deficiencies that endanger the health and safety of the HHA’s patients and has had a temporary management appointed to oversee the management of the HHA; (F) has had all or part of its Medicare payments suspended; or (G) under any Federal or State law within the 2-year period beginning on October 1, 1988—(1) has had its participation in the Medicare program terminated; (2) has been assessed a penalty of not less than \$5,000 for deficiencies in Federal or State standards for HHAs; (3) was subject to a suspension of Medicare payments to which it otherwise would have been entitled; (4) had operated under a temporary management that was appointed to oversee the operation of the HHA and to ensure the health and safety of the HHA’s patients; or (5) was closed or had its residents transferred by the State.

State Agency program: The SA will revoke approval of an HHA’s NATCEP, and/or 16-hour home health aide training program, for any of the above-listed findings for 24 consecutive months. Agencies who have had their NATCEP, and/or home health aide training programs, revoked for any of the above reasons will be required to submit to the SA a written request for reinstatement when they have met all of the requirements and have received no further sanctions during the 24-month sanction period. The request must contain notification of any anticipated changes to the previously approved program or approved instructors. When reviewed and approved, the SA will notify the HHA in writing that the training and competency evaluation program is reinstated.

(ii) Qualifications for instructors. The training of home health aides and the supervision of home health aides during the supervised practical portion of the training must be performed by or under the general supervision of a registered nurse who possesses a minimum of 2 years of nursing experience, at least 1 year of which must be in the provision of home health care.

State Agency program: The 16-hour home health aide training and competency evaluation program must be supervised by a registered nurse who has at least 2 years of nursing experience, at least 1 year of which has been in the provision of home health services, and who has supervised home health aide services for at least 6 months.

(2)(ii) Other individuals may be used to provide instruction under the supervision of a qualified registered nurse.

State Agency program: Classroom and clinical training may be performed by appropriate professionals who teach those portions of the program for which they have expertise. These health care professionals include physicians, pharmacists, physical/occupational/speech therapists, medical social workers, licensed nutritionists, and others as are appropriate.

(3) Documentation of training. The HHA must maintain sufficient documentation to demonstrate that the requirements of this standard are met.

State Agency program: The HHA must maintain the following documentation in the aide's personnel or training file: current nurse aide and home health aide certification of competency notice from the SA; copy of the nurse aide and home health aide competency checklists.

484.36(b) Standard: Competency evaluation and inservice training.

(1) Applicability. An individual may furnish home health aide services on behalf of an HHA only after that individual has successfully completed a competency evaluation program as described in his paragraph. The HHA is responsible for ensuring that the individuals who furnish home health aide services on its behalf meet the competency evaluation requirements of this section.

State Agency program: An HHA may use only individuals who have successfully completed a competency evaluation program described in paragraph (2) of this section to furnish home health aide services.

(2) Content and frequency of evaluations and amount of inservice training. (i) The competency evaluation must address each of the subjects listed in paragraph (a)(i)(ii) through (xiii) of this section.

State Agency program: To be certified competent by the SA, home health aides are required to complete the State Competency Evaluation Program (SCEP) (see CFR 483.154, Nurse aide competency evaluation). The SCEP includes written (or oral) and/or skills testing of all of the subjects listed in paragraph (a)(i)(ii) through (xiii) of this section. The SA program also requires the training agency to complete the Montana Nurse Aide Competency Checklist as part of the individual's evaluation during instruction. This checklist contains all required skills in addition to others designed to meet the core curriculum requirements. To insure that home health aides are competent to provide care in the home, the Montana Home Health Aide Competency Checklist is to be completed by the instructor(s) during the extended (16-hour) home health aide training program. The formal evaluation of clinical skills must be conducted on a volunteer who is either a patient or another person (note: manikins may not be used).

(ii) The HHA must complete a performance review of each home health aide no less frequently than every 12 months.

State Agency program: To insure continued competency of each aide, the HHA must complete an annual performance review of each aide no less than every 12 months. The annual performance review should include an evaluation of the tasks that the aide is assigned to do, as well as other performance criteria established by the agency. This review is snot an additional competency evaluation. The review may take place over a period of time while the aide is performing assigned tasks in the home (i.e., during supervisory visits). If an aide is found to unsatisfactorily perform any task(s) to which he/she is assigned, the HHA should provide remedial training and reevaluation to insure the aide maintains satisfactory performance of the task(s). The annual performance review must be documented and retained in the aide's personnel or training file. Any format that describes: (1) the tasks and performance criteria reviewed, (2) whether performance was or was not satisfactory, and (3) any remedial training and results of reevaluation. This may be done in the form of a checklist if the HHA desires.

(iii) The home health aide must receive at least 12 hours of inservice training during each 12-month period. The inservice training may be furnished while the aide is furnishing care to the patient.

State Agency program: Home health aides must receive a minimum of 12 hours of inservice (continuing education) during each 12-month period, from either the date of hire or date of completion of a training and competency evaluation program. Inservice training may occur during a supervisory visit but must be documented as to the exact new skill or theory taught. To insure inservice information is easily retrievalbe and accessible, agencies should keep individual inservice records which include the following: date of each inservice, title/subject covered, number of minutes/hours attended, and signature of the instructor. This information is required by the SA at the time the home health aide must recertify (every 24 months). Individuals who do not meet this requirement will not be recertified as home health aides until they again meet certification requirements (16 hours of home health training and competency evaluation).

(3) Conduct of evaluation and training. (i) Organization. A home health aide competency evaluation program may be offered by any organization except as specified in paragraph (s)(2)(i) of this section. The inservice training may be offered by any organization.

State Agency program. The SCEP is conducted by a SA-approved testing organization; the full skills evaluations (nurse aide and home health aide checklists) are completed by SA-approved instructors. Home health agency-based proctors and/or instructors will have their competency evaluation administration approvals to provide this service to their employer revoked if any sanction under paragraph (a)(2)(i) are invoked. Home health agencies may continue to provide inservice education to, and the annual performance review of, employees, even when sanctions under (a)(2)(i) are implemented.

(ii) Evaluators and instructors. The competency evaluation must be performed by a registered nurse. The inservice training generally must be supervised by a registered nurse who possesses a minimum of 2 years of nursing experience at least 1 year of which must be in the provision of home health care.

State Agency program: Only registered nurses are approved as proctors to conduct the SCEP.

The home health aide skills checklist, completed as the competency evaluation by the agency's home health aide training instructor, must be done by a registered nurse who has a minimum of 2 years of nursing experience at least 1 year of which must be in the provision of home health care.

(iii) Subject areas. The subject areas listed at paragraph (a)(1)(ix), (x), and (xi) of this section must be evaluated after observation of the aide's performance of the tasks with a patient. The other subject areas in paragraph (a)(1) of this section may be evaluated through written examination, oral examination, or after observation of a home health aide with a patient.

State Agency program: To meet SA certification of competency requirements and entry to the nurse aide registry, home health aides must be evaluated by written or oral examination and/or direct observation of all skills listed on the nurse aide and home health aide skills competency checklists. In addition, home health aides must have passed a written or oral examination and skills test conducted by the SA-approved testing organization.

The nurse aide and home health aide skills checklists contain the following subject areas which, to meet this requirement, should be evaluated by observing the aide perform tasks on an individual who volunteers to act as the subject. Where possible, the volunteer should be an actual patient who has given permission to act as the subject.

1. All personal care tasks (bathing, shampooing, nail and skin care, oral hygiene, assistance with toileting and elimination, assistance with dressing, etc.)
2. Safe transfer and ambulation techniques, including utilization of proper body mechanics.
3. Restorative nursing, e.g., range of motion and proper positioning.

The State skills checklists require the demonstration of all other tasks when competency cannot be determined without utilizing a live subject (temperature, pulse and respiration, blood pressure, Heimlich maneuver, assistance with feeding, etc.) or by actually observing the task being performed by the aide (handwashing, linen handling, bedmaking, disposal of contaminated equipment in the home, light housekeeping, etc.)

4. Competency determinations.

(i) A home health aide is not considered competent in any task for which he or she is evaluated as “unsatisfactory.” The aide must not perform that task without direct supervision by a licensed nurse until after he or she receives training in the task for which he or she was evaluated as “unsatisfactory” and passes a subsequent evaluation with “satisfactory.”

State Agency program: To meet SA certification of competency and entry in the SA’s nurse aide registry, a home health aide must satisfactorily pass all tasks (1) contained in the core curriculum requirements (Appendix C) and (2) as listed on the nurse aide and home health aide skills competency checklists (see Appendices A and G), and (3) pass the SA-approved written (or oral) and skills test conducted by the approved testing organization.

5. The HHA must maintain documentation that the requirements of this standard are met.

State Agency program: Home health aides meeting the SA certification of competency requirements will be issued a notice from the SA verifying they have met the competency evaluation program requirements for nurse aides and home health aides. Home health agencies are to maintain copies of the notice, along with the completed skills checklists, in the aides’ personnel or training files to meet this requirement. The notice verifies that the home health aide has met all competency evaluation requirements. Registration by the SA is effective for no more than 24-month periods. To maintain certification of competency by the SA, home health aides must meet the recertification requirements for nurse aides (they must have worked at least one 8-hour shift within the 24 consecutive months immediately preceding the expiration of their SA certification of competency/registration and have received 12 hours of continuing education credit for each year of the certification/registration period.)

6. Effective date. The HHA must implement a competency evaluation program that meets the requirements of this paragraph before February 14, 1990. The HHA must provide the preparation necessary for the individual to successfully complete the competency evaluation program. After August 14, 1990, the HHA may use only those aides that have been found to be competent in accordance with 484.36(b).

State Agency program: As of August 14, 1990, home health agencies may use only aides who have completed a competency evaluation program as specified in 483.36(b). (Note: The SA’s program for certification of competency and registration of nurse aides and home health aides began July 1, 1989. Home health agencies in the state have voluntarily complied with the competency requirements since that date and are surveyed by the Sa on a 1-3 year schedule to determine continuing compliance with this requirement.)